



Haunted House Silhouettes

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TOOLS:

- [PDFs of silhouette images \(1\)](#)
Available for download in Step 1
- [Scissors \(1\)](#)
- [White chalk pencil \(1\)](#)



PARTS:

- [Black paper \(1\)](#)
My roll was 36" x 3600" and cost \$74

SUMMARY

With some jobs, when you're burned out it's best to take a break, to get away from the office and focus on something else. With creativity, however, I've found the opposite helps: for me the only cure for burnout is more challenges rather than fewer.

One such challenge came my way a few years ago, when I had an opportunity to decorate an entire house for Halloween. The homeowner had a strict \$100 budget and insisted that nothing be attached to the house in a manner that would damage the exterior shingles. The place was newly purchased, and the homeowner had yet to install any window treatments beyond inexpensive paper "contractor blinds" on all of the windows.

The challenge was at first daunting, not least because I was doing the project pro-bono, the materials budget was tiny, and the restrictions seemed stifling.

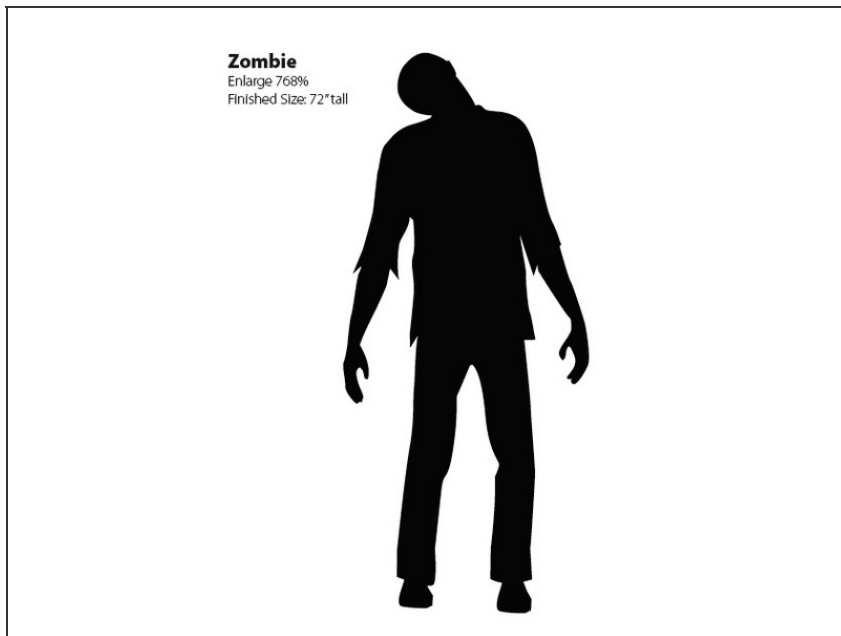
The solution arrived when I realized that the paper blinds on all of the windows provided me the chance to turn the entire house into one oversized luminary by creating very large paper

silhouettes on all of the windows.

And, as for the pleasantly unexpected result, not only was the project great fun to create, but Sterling Publishing also took an interest in it and has just published [Spooky Halloween Silhouettes](#) (see the [CRAFT review](#)), my book based on this original project. The book consists of twenty eight black-paper punch-out silhouettes that can be affixed to windows or photocopied and enlarged, thus allowing others to put together a spooky house-sized luminary of their own.

Project originally posted on [CRAFT](#).

Step 1 — Print out PDFs.

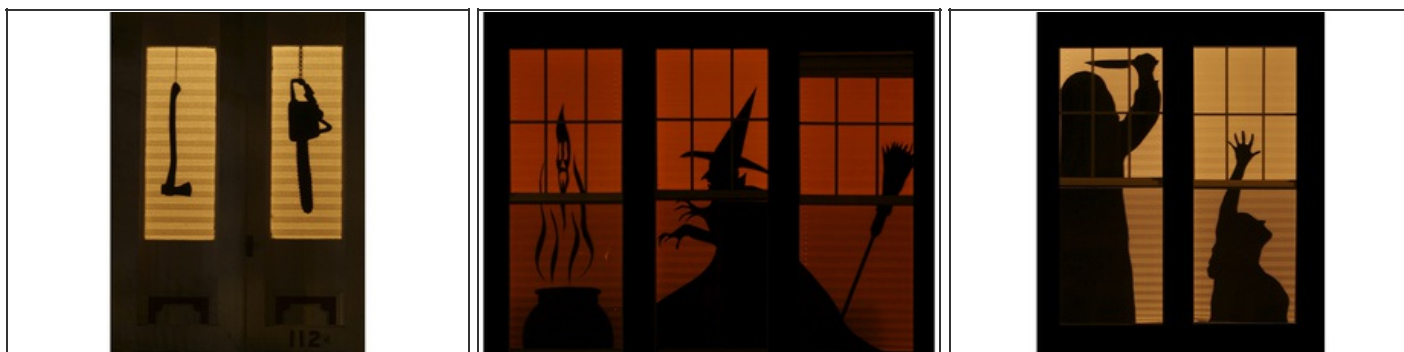


- For anyone unable or unwilling to sketch out images on their own, I've included 3 PDFs that you can print out:
 - [A saw](#)
 - [A headless woman](#)
 - [A zombie](#)

Step 2 — Enlarge images.

- Once printed, take these images to a copy center and have them enlarged by the percentages listed below in order to create a full-sized template. Most copy centers can "tile" an oversized image, which is to say, they will print it out on multiple sheets of paper that you can then assemble, jigsaw-like, with tape and use as a template.
- To calculate enlargement percentages for your own images, take the size of the silhouette you want and divide it by the size of the silhouette you have (for example, the 9" silhouette of the headless woman below can be enlarged to 60" by copying it at 666% - 60 divided by 9 equals 6.66 or 666%).
- The silhouettes I created were drawn freehand and then cut out with scissors. Precision and exactness is NOT required, since the silhouettes are meant to appear as shadows and, as such, are expected to be a little abstract and distorted. Once cut, I simply adhered them to each window using transparent tape.
- The goal is to create a shadow that suggests to passers-by outside that something not at all nice is happening just on the other side of the wall.

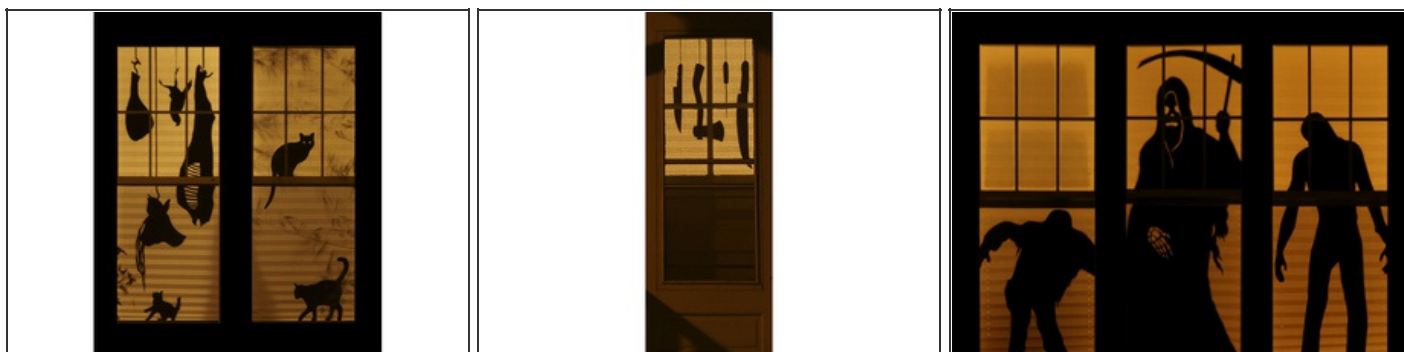
Step 3 — Ideas.



- In my project I hung an axe and a chainsaw in the windows of the front door as a nasty way to welcome trick-or-treaters.
- The three windows of the living room revealed a witch and her broom over a boiling caldron.
- In the dining room, a knife-wielding maniac and his intended victim are caught in a moment of suspended horror.
- I tried to draw on many of the familiar visual tropes from horror films. It was obvious that children would be likely to see these images so I tried to be mindful of that. Admittedly, a few of the images are strong, but the cartoonish quality of them and the fact that they were paired with less threatening images helped convey to viewers that the whole project was done in the spirit of good (and creepy) fun. Be sure to modify the images you choose with your audience in mind.

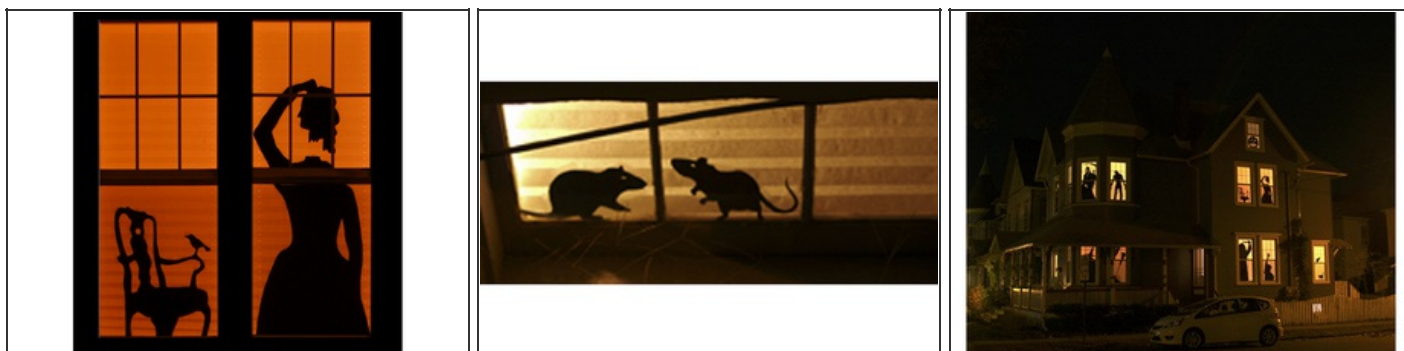


Step 4



- The kitchen is filled with carnage of a somewhat culinary sort, with three black cats standing guard over the viands.
- The back door is no more welcoming than the front door.
- The grim reaper and his attendant zombies survey the neighborhood below from their second-floor vantage in the cupola of the master bedroom.

Step 5



- A second-floor room reveals the ghost of an unfortunate guest who never left.
- Even the basement windows reveal a few brazen rats in search of Halloween candy.
- This is just a sampling of the more than 38 windows and five doors that I cut sinister shapes for. The final project made for an eye-catching sight in an otherwise dark and sleepy little hamlet. With a few inexpensive supplies and a dark imagination, you can turn your own house into the creepiest manse in town.

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